

The SUBSTANCE of what

Sir Bartholomew Shower

Spake At the Guild-Hall Exon, August 19th, 1698.

U P O N

Declaring the Poll for the Burgesſes of that City Elected, to Serve in this Present Parliament.

Gentlemen,

I Am ſorry that Sir Edward Seymour, my Partner, is not here preſent, to excuſe me from this trouble of making you a publick Addreſs of Thanks; I am ſure 'twould be then much better perform'd. I am ever fond of ſpeaking any thing in my own Buſineſs, or concerning My Self; much leſs in ſo Publick a Manner, and upon ſuch an Occaſion.

However, ſince ſomething of this kind is expected from me, I hope you will permit me to thank Mr. Sheriff for his Juſtice and Patience, the Clerks for their Pains and Care, and the Tryers, Inſpectors, and Managers, for their Temper and good Manners. I muſt own, I never knew more Civility, and leſs ill Uſage, in ſuch a troubleſom Affair; and where each Party is hearty and zealous for its Principle and Inter-eſts; unleſs it were from One, whom I muſt publickly take Notice of, One of My own Profeſſion, who intruded himſelf into the Court with a Lye in his Mouth, pretending to be a Free holder, which he was not, was buſie here beyond the Rules of Decency, and afterwards break'd out of Court towards the End of the Poll; he is, I ſuppoſe, a Gentleman well known, and therefore I need not name him; but ſhall ever remember him according to his Deſerts.

Gentlemen, I am likewiſe to take notice of ſome Reſtlections, Maliciouſly and Faſtly caſt upon me; particularly in that Scandalous Libel, or Queries Poſted at the Guild-hall; a baſe, mean, and unmanly way of Injuring a Gentleman's Reputation.

It hath been ſinuated, as if I was a Popiſt; whereas, I never was preſent, nor ever heard Maſſe in my Lifetime. I was in the Service of the late King, but ſo far from being a Popiſt, that I conſtantly was a Communicant in the Church of England; and never cou'd, nor ever ſhall believe Pope Pius's Creed.

It was pretended, to my Prejudice, as if I had been inclin'd to the Eighteen-Penny Act. I thank God, the Church of England hath a competent Support, and I pray for its Continuance; but cannot well in that manner with ſome more, leaſt it encreaſe the Envy againſt it, which is more than enough already: Tho' the Motion was made to Me, I thought it very Improper and Unſeaſonable, and ſo declar'd it; eſpecially at a Time, when the People labour under ſuch, and ſo great Taxes and Payments, as they are hardly able to bear: The Report therefore was Malicious and Faſe.

They have further Reſected on Me as a Council, and as Pleading for Traytors; I have done it, and with ſuch Manners, as never diſguſted my Superiors: And it has been acknowledg'd to be for the Honour of the King and Government, to permit a fair and favourable Hearing of Council in all Caſes. There is no Reaſon that the Principles or Actions of Clients, ſhould be imputed to the Council that plead for 'em; I am ſure 'tis not ſo eſteem'd Above, or in other Places: 'Tis the greateſt Commendation that can be of the Preſent Government, that there have been no Reſtlections or Harſhips upon any Council, that have appear'd in any Criminal Cauſe whatſoever. Thoſe Men have been reckon'd the Greateſt and Beſt among the Romans, who undertook to defend Perſons under Proſecution: Sure I am, 'tis a much more difficult Province to Diſord, than 'tis to Accuſe; and I hope the People are by this time ſatisfied that I was in no Fault upon that Account.

Again they have ſaid in their Malice, that I was Conſenting to the taking off the Penal Laws and Teſt: 'Tis Faſe, and I was never ſo much as Coſeſſed to that Purpoſe. I was a Servant to the late Unhappy King; but I hope 'tis no Reſlection upon any Perſon to be True to his Truſt. Had I been in the Service of this King, I ſhould have been as True, and as I am now to ſerve My Country and the King, I will be True to both, and Zealous in their Service to the utmoſt of my Power.

As to the other Little Reſtlections, I cannot value 'em ſo much as to allow 'em an Answer, but muſt deſpiſe 'em: I cou'd Recriminate, but think it better to forbear. I can gueſs who wrote the Queries, and from whence they came: One of the Candidates of the Other Side is to Good a Man, that He freely gave his Vote for Me to be His and Your Representative, and therefore He cou'd not be the Author.

And now as to *Mr. Bask* - if you send me about: I cou'd wish that you cou'd and wou'd Poll again, for the ascertaining *Your Opinions*, and acquainting Me *what I am to do*. I wou'd willingly undergo Three such Days Fatigue more, or stay till the Beginning of the Session to know your Sentiments: And *Gentlemen*, I shall never *Vote contrary* to your *General Inclinations*, unless I can render you a satisfactory Reason why it is for *Your Service* that I do so.

There are but *Three Things* that can be of *Concomitant*; *Religion*, *Government*, and *Trade*.

As to *Religion*, by the little Conversation I have had in *This Place* of late, tho' I was *Born and Bred* among you, and many of you were my School-fellows, even till my Age of Seventeen Years, yet that is some time since. Therefore, I say, by the Conversation I have had with you of late, I take it to be your general Sentiment, that the *National Establish'd Church of England*, is the Best in the World, and the most Necessary, in respect of Publick Government; its *Doctrine* the most *Rational* and *Primitive*, its *Publick Liturgy* the best fram'd, to *Life*, and to *Express Devotion*; and I challenge any Man to shew me any Words so likely to inspire Mens Minds with *Fervor* and *Zeal*, as the *Magnificat* and *Te Deum*.

In *This Church* I have been a *Constant Communicant*, ever since the Eighteenth Year of my Age; but yet I must declare (notwithstanding the false Imputation of it to our Church) that my Opinion is against *Persecution*; and it some differ from me, whom I do respect and value, I hope they will not think it my Fault, but my Misfortune. I cannot forbear thinking that no Man should suffer for acting according to his *Conscience*, in Matters *merely Religious*: I am for *Liberty of Conscience* to those, who for *Real Conscience* cannot comply; but I cannot much respect those Men, who pretend to such a *Scrupulous Conscience*, and yet can *Occasionally Communicate* with us, on purpose to *Qualify* themselves for an Office. I tell you therefore, that I am not for taking away the *Tolerance* as it is Limited in the Exercise of it by the Laws of the Land, tho' that has been industriously Spread Abroad throughout the Town, as if nothing were design'd but the *Silencing* of those *Ministers*: No, My Aim is only to *Maintain the Church*, as now supported and ten'd; and I wish and hope, that the *Dis-senters* will now be satisfied with *This*, since 'tis That, and That only, which for Twenty or Thirty Years together, *They* have Pray'd for, and Desir'd. We hope therefore, that *They* will be content with it, and that all of us may be Happy.

As to the *Government*, The best we can do is to Serve it, by *Obedience to the Laws*; and to prevent *Taxes* as much as possible, unless they are of Publick Necessity to preserve the Whole; and in case *Taxes* are so necessary, to take Care that they be *Laid Equally*, and with as little Burthen to *Trade* as can be; which puts me in Mind of saying something to *That*.

And here, I hope, I shall agree with *You*; and *You* with *Me*, That *Trade* is not to be forc'd or restrain'd, but ought to have its *Full Liberty*. That 'tis the Interest of this Kingdom in General, as well as of this Country, that *It* should be humbled. Not that the Country should be Drown'd, or the People Massacre'd, (such Desires are very unuitable to an English Temper) but that a Check be put their hold Attempts for turning the *Woollen Manu-facture* out of its *Old Channel*, by removing it from *Hence*, *Thither*. It must of necessity impoverish Us, and I wonder Our *Gentry* are not more sensible of the Danger; for 'twill unavoidably Lessen the *Value* of their *Lands*. *Trade* and *Reins* must be Equally Encouraged; It is therefore the Interest of *Every-body* to mind this Matter, as well as of *Those* who are actually concern'd in the *Managing* of *Trade*.

These, I presume, are *Your Thoughts*, *They* are *Mine*, I assure You, and shall be follow'd unless I be convinc'd it; and at any time, any thing material shall be communicated from any Body or Number of Men among You, in this place, I shall endeavour to advance it, or convince You that it is not *Practicable*, or *Unreasonable*. Tho' I am to be govern'd by my *Own Judgment* in my *Vote*, Yet I can make it comply with the *Thoughts* of those where I *Represent* in the *House of Commons*, I shall always be glad of it; for in some Respects I take my self to be *Your Advocate*, and I am to do what *You* wou'd do if *Your Opinions* were known. I have one thing more to take Notice of, it is that which is extremely to my Satisfaction: Not only that *This Election* is so *Fair*, *Regular*, and *Free*; but that I came in by the Interest of *The Church of England*, and by the *Chamber of this City*, as well as by the hearty Endeavours of the good *Trading People* here; and I may add, with the General Approbation of the *Gentry of Devon*, as well as with the good Will of *The Right Reverend Father in God*, the *Lord Bishop of This Diocese*, who is much *Your Friend*, and has us'd his utmost endeavours for the Promotion of the *Wool Bill*: I am an Eye and Ear witness of it; I was present with Him from Nine till One for several days together, four or five days a Week, for a long time. His Labours were great as was his *Zeal for Your Service*; and I am morally assur'd that He will repeat His Endeavours, the *Next Session*, and so will I with all my Heart. I shall be very warm as long as I am in *Your Service* to promote the good of *this City*, the Place of my *Birth* and *Education*. And God Preserve *King William*, and the City of *Exeter*.

